

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

Claims 1–11 were previously pending and under consideration.

Claims 12–18 have been added.

Therefore, claims 1–18 are now pending and under consideration.

Claims 1–11 stand rejected.

Claims 1, 9, and 10 are amended herein.

No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC § 102

Claims 1 and 9–11 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102 as anticipated by the Background of the Invention (Background). For reasons presented below, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Background Does Not Have Tag Flag That Indicates Whether A Separate Multiple Tag Field is Attached

As amended, claim 1 recites "determining that [a] first node includes a tag flag having a setting indicating that a multiple tag field, that does not contain the tag flag, is attached to the first node, and in response evaluating settings in the multiple tag field, and for each setting that indicates a tag, associating the first node with a category corresponding to that tag". Claim 1 also recites "determining that [a] second node includes a tag flag having a setting indicating that a multiple tag field is not attached to the second node".

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It can be seen that the trie of claim 1 has nodes that each have a tag flag. The tag flag allows some nodes to have a multiple tag field and other nodes to not have a multiple tag field. A node's tag flag setting indicates whether the node has an attached multiple tag field. The tag flag in the cited prior has no such function; it does not indicate whether or not a multiple tag field is attached because in the Background art a multiple tag field is always attached (see discussion below).

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Background Cannot Have A Second Node That Does Not Have A Multiple Tag Field

Claim 1 recites "determining that the second node includes a tag flag having a setting indicating that a multiple tag field is not attached to the second node". The rejection cites a prior art trie where nodes have multiple tags. However, as stated in the Background, with such prior art tries, multi-tagging of nodes is "done by setting aside an additional bit in each node for each additional subset" (page 4, lines 21–24, emphasis added). Furthermore, the Background states that "reserving such tagging bits in each node reduces compression" (page 5, lines 1–2, emphasis added). The prior art cited by the rejection clearly teaches reserving multiple bits for each flag for all nodes of a trie. This causes bloat in the prior art trie because the trie has many additional bits even when they are not needed. Claim 1 avoids this problem because a multiple flag field is optional; the tag flag indicates whether or not a node has a multiple tag field, and, unlike the Background art, a node can have no attached multiple tag field.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Background's Tag Flag Is Part Of Multiple Tag Field

The rejection compares claim 1's tag flag to a tag in the prior art's multiple tag field. The tag flag cited by the rejection is a tag in the prior art's multiple flag field (e.g., a gender tag in a field of other tags). However, claim 1 clearly recites that the "multiple tag field ... does not contain the tag flag". The "tag flag" in the Background is part of the prior art's multiple tag field and is therefore distinguishable from the tag flag of claim 1.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is further respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIMS 12-18

Newly added claim 12 recites "determining whether nodes of a trie have respective tag flag settings that indicate whether or not the respective nodes have respective separate multi-tag fields attached thereto". Furthermore some nodes do not have multi-tag fields, and nodes are handled differently according to whether their tag field indicates that a multi-tag field is attached.

Newly added claim 15 recites "some of the nodes further comprise respective multi-tag fields, and ... some of the nodes do not further comprise multi-tag fields". Furthermore, claim 15 recites "determining whether or not nodes have respective multi-tag fields attached thereto by evaluating settings of the respective nodes' tag flags". Since the Background prior art includes a multi-tag field in each node, there is no reason for the Background art to determine whether or not nodes have multi-tag fields attached thereto.

DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The dependent claims are deemed to be patentable based on their dependence from allowable independent claims. The dependent claims are also independently patentable for the features recited therein. For example, claim 3 recites that "evaluating information in a header of the trie to determine a size of the bitmask". The cited prior art does not discuss or suggest this feature. Withdrawal of the rejection of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above remarks it is submitted that the claims are patentably distinct over the prior art and that all the rejections to the claims have been overcome. Reconsideration and reexamination of the above Application is requested. Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that the pending claims be allowed, and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes, after this Response, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

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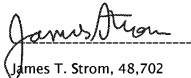
**Reply under 37 CFR 1.116
Expedited Procedure – Technology Center 2100**

If this Amendment is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this Response, including an extension fee that is not covered by an enclosed check please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: 23 March 2006

By:


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